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Greetings from your National Weather Service office in Tallahassee, Florida!

Hurricane season is already underway for 2007 with an above normal year predicted. The official NOAA forecast is for 13 to 17 tropical storms, with 7 to 10 of these storms becoming hurricanes, with 3 to 5 of these becoming major hurricanes. For more information on the hurricane season forecast and how it was developed, you can visit the National Hurricane Center website at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov> and click on the links at the top of the page.

With hurricane season already underway, now is the time to review your preparedness plans before the first hurricane or tropical storm watch is issued. Make sure you know where you will go if our area is threatened by a hurricane. Carefully listen to the advice of your local emergency management agency about the need for any evacuations.

Other preparedness information for hurricanes can be found at the following links:

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml>

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/hurricane/index.shtml>

The summer also presents other dangerous weather conditions for our region. Afternoon showers and thunderstorms can develop rapidly with little or no warning. When a thunderstorm develops, seek shelter immediately. Remember and use the 30-30 rule. The 30/30 Rule states that people should seek shelter if the "Flash-To-Bang" delay (length of time in seconds between a lightning flash and its subsequent thunder), is 30 seconds or less, and that they remain under cover until 30 minutes after the final clap of thunder.

A 30 second lead time is necessary prior to a storm's arrival because of the possibility of distant strikes. A 30 minute wait after the last thunder is heard is necessary because the trailing storm clouds still carry a lingering charge. This charge can and does occasionally produce lightning on the back edge of a storm, several minutes after the rain has ended.

Studies have shown most people struck by lightning are struck not at the height of a thunderstorm, but before and after the storm has peaked. This shows many people are unaware of how far lightning can strike from its parent thunderstorm. Do not wait for the rain to start before seeking shelter, and do not leave shelter just because the rain has ended.

Summertime thunderstorms can also produce very heavy rainfall over a short amount of time. This can cause flooding of poor drainage areas, even with the drought conditions ongoing across the region. Remember some of the images you have seen in your spotter training. Never attempt to cross a road covered by water. The depth may be too great for your car to pass safely. When observing flooding, we would like to know how deep you think the water is, but just like spotting a thunderstorm, don't put yourself or others at risk by trying to drive into the flooded road.

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Finally, let me thank you all for continuing to provide spotter reports, either through the phone, espotter, or email. These reports greatly assist us in doing our job and ensuring we get timely and accurate warnings to the public.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the spotter program or meteorological questions in general. I can be reached through email at Kelly.Godsey@noaa.gov or by phone at 850-942-8833.

-Kelly Godsey
SKYWARN Program Manager